

Kingston, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement after President Obama's Oval Office address on the end of combat operations in Iraq.

"Since President Obama entered office, 100,000 American troops have been removed from Iraq and after seven long years, today America's combat mission there is ending. Despite trying circumstances, our armed forces acted with courage and character. Most served multiple tours, many were injured and too many gave their lives in service to their country. We must never forget that sacrifice and we must work to honor it by continuing to support members of our military and their families.

"As we welcome these brave men and women home, however, we must also work to ensure that America never again engages in a war under false pretenses, with an unclear mission and without an exit strategy. With thousands of Americans killed along with many innocent Iraqi civilians, trillions of dollars irresponsibly spent and our international reputation badly damaged, this is a mistake our nation cannot afford to repeat.

"As the nature of our commitment in Iraq is now changing from a military mission to one that is civilian-led, a much smaller transitional force will remain in the country to continue supporting Iraqi security forces. While President Obama and his advisors have deemed this necessary, I continue to look forward to a day when America no longer requires a military presence within Iraq."